

From: Michael Holve
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 10:39pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Ms. Hesse,

I'd like to take this opportunity to voice my opinion on the Microsoft settlement issue while I have the chance.

I, like many others feel that Microsoft should definitely NOT be given the chance to simply hand out hardware and/or software to settle, especially to schools. This is exactly what they want and it would be a walk in the park for them - and do absolutely nothing to stave off their aggressive, anti-competitive practices in the industry.

Their "software donation" would cost them very little in the big picture since it's theirs to begin with, and would further gain Microsoft ground in the educational market, where they've been held off by Apple. So not only would they get off easy, but they have another opportunity to get their foot in the door where previously they could not. They would in effect, squash yet another competitor in their primary market if allowed to do this. Same goes for the hardware - it would be a tax write off for them. Microsoft has way too much money and power in this industry that such a "settlement" would mean nothing to them. They spit in the face of justice, if this were allowed to pass.

In my opinion, Microsoft needs to be dealt with in the strictest of manners or they will simply continue their methods. While I don't necessarily feel that the government should get involved in carving up companies, monopolies DO need to be dealt with, especially one as powerful as Microsoft has become. I don't think I need to remind you that Microsoft software runs 90% of the computers on the PLANET. Hello?

Microsoft, since the beginning of this case has tried to "look good" in the eye of the public with several similar donations and "good will efforts." Those of us that are in the industry clearly see through this, as I hope everyone else involved in this case does, but I fear that may not be the case.

I have been involved in this industry for twenty years and am pretty much at the peak of my career. For almost the last decade, I have been strictly anti-Microsoft, neither recommending their software nor using it in a professional capacity. I won't turn this into a rant, but suffice it to say that I will not be a party to their strong-arm tactics.

Take a little peak at Microsoft's current "licensing structure" for their latest software such as "Office X" for the Macintosh, or the "Windows XP" operating system for Intel-based computers. That this can be allowed to

continue is a true crime. It amounts to nothing short of pure extortion.

Here's a brief example. Microsoft has all but killed ANY competitors in the "office suite" market, leaving just "Microsoft Office" as the sole choice. This software retails, on average - close to \$500. Upgrades which come frequently enough to milk customers dry, and also at \$150 or more. The only people that can afford this are businesses. For the average home consumer, there are few options save for watered down leftovers after Microsoft blitzkrieged the landscape of viable alternatives.

Look at the whole "Microsoft vs. Linux" debacle, also. They've basically targeted Linux for destruction, but alas - it's out of their reach. For now...

I urge you, nay - I BEG YOU - to do the right thing here. Do not let Microsoft get away with these shenanigans. Examine, re-examine - and examine yet again the clear evidence before you of cut-throat, monopolistic and downright dirty business practices of this giant mega-corporation. You are the only few that can approach them and bring about this change. Should you look the other way and allow this travesty to continue, I fear for the computer industry and the future of personal and business computers everywhere. American business as well as that abroad rely heavily on computers to bring about economic growth to the world economies and the American GNP. Do we really want to leave that in the hands of this clearly arrogant corporation that defies the DOJ and it's critics alike with these paltry attempts at appeasement?

Bill Gates and Microsoft Corporation did not get where they are today because of good products and practices. Do not take Gates lightly - he is a shrewd businessman, if nothing else - and I wager, has a good team behind him. They will worm their way through loopholes if allowed the slightest chance.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that my opinion has reached someone, anyone - that cares to listen. Feel free to contact me if you should like any further discussion...

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"With sufficient thrust, pigs fly just fine." -- RFC 1925